December 29, 1951 Bruce Diaries (Duplicates)

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Secret - Security Info

Dec 29, 1951

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I saw Pleven this afternoon. He would like to know when Secretary Lovett is likely to see Bonnet and tell him about arms shipments to Indochina. Says material situation there bad because recent heavy fighting and consequent diminution and wear and tear equipment.

Pleven believes his governmental situation critical but not desperate (his admirable speech last night gave him victory over Daladier and others determined attack on Indochina policy). His next test will be budget debate which will continue over New Years and will come to final vote next week. At present Socialists oppose his program for cutting deficit railways and social security system. Independents and other members his coalition will not support new taxes unless he makes these economies. He may have to pose vote of confidence ten times.

He said request Fr Govt for postponement Lisbon conference primarily motivated by domestic political situation. If his Govt survives budget dispute Parliamentarians determined to take recess. This agreeable to him since between Jan 9 and 29 he could work on them to dispose them to better mood re decision

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Eur Army. Foreign affairs debate would then start Jan 30 and by using strong methods he would limit it to week or ten days.

Plevon may shortly make announcement inviting other nations to participate in Eur Constitutional Convention. He must be assured that idea will meet favorable reception from some of states to be invited. Such reception now seems certain. Chief remaining hesitation over timing springs from apprehension that in France might now be considered tricky attempt divert attention from dangerous financial difficulties. Eisenhower, myself and others very keen it be done immediately, particularly because ever present possibility Govt crisis.

Bruce

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